



SPRING 1999 RELEASE ITEM

Grade 7 Reading

As you approach your high school years, you will be reading more and more nonfiction. When you read nonfiction, you should read in a way that is different from the way you read fiction. The article below presents some strategies for reading nonfiction. Read the article. Then answer the questions that follow.

Strategies for Reading Nonfiction

Nonfiction can be read as a piece of literature or as a source of information. Use the following strategies when you read nonfiction.

1. **Preview** a selection before you read. Look at the title, pictures, diagrams, subtitles, and any terms in boldfaced print or italics. All of these will give you an idea of what the selection is about.
2. **Figure out the organization.** If the work is a biography or autobiography, the organization is probably chronological, that is, in the order that events happened. Other articles may be arranged around ideas the author wants to discuss. Understanding the organization can help you predict what to expect next.
3. **Separate facts and opinions.** **Facts** are statements that can be proved, such as "There are several autobiographies in this book." **Opinions** are statements that cannot be proved. They simply express the writer's beliefs, such as "Boy is the best autobiography in this book." Writers of nonfiction sometimes present opinions as if they were facts. Be sure you recognize the difference.
4. **Question** as you read. Why did things happen the way they did? How did people feel? What is the writer's opinion? Do you share the writer's opinion, or do you have different ideas on the subject?
5. During your reading, stop now and then and try to **predict** what will come next. Sometimes you will be surprised by what happens or by what the author has to say about an issue.
6. As you read, **build** on your understanding. Add new information to what you have already learned and see if your ideas and opinions change.
7. Continually **evaluate** what you read. Evaluation should be an ongoing process, not just something that is done when you have finished reading. Remember that evaluation means more than saying a selection is good or bad. Form opinions about people, events, and ideas that are presented. Decide whether or not you like the way the piece was written.

Finally, it is important to recognize that your understanding of a selection does not end when you stop reading. As you think more about what you have read and discuss it with others, you will find that your understanding continues to grow.



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Grade 7 Reading

How do students provide evidence of what they know and can do in reading?

SAMPLE OPEN-RESPONSE QUESTION

The following is an example of an open-response question designed to provide an opportunity for students to show what they know and can do in the area of reading:

Strategies for Reading Nonfiction

Information in a nonfiction passage may be organized using a variety of methods, depending on the purpose of the passage.

- Describe the methods used by the author to organize his strategies for reading nonfiction.
- Explain how these methods help the reader better understand the purpose of the passage.

Support your answers with details from the passage.

What is the relationship of the assessment to the curriculum?

READING CONTENT

The content of the open-response question “Strategies for Reading Nonfiction” addresses Reading Academic Expectation 1.2: “Students make sense of the variety of materials they read.”

This question provides a way for students to show their understanding of several concepts from the *Core Content for Reading Assessment*. Students are asked to read a passage that contains practical information, to describe the methods used to organize the information in the passage, and to explain how these methods of organization help the reader better understand the purpose of the passage.

How good is good enough?

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

An appropriate student response should provide evidence of the student’s ability to read and understand a passage that offers practical information (i.e., strategies for reading nonfiction), to identify organizational methods used by the author of the passage, and to explain the usefulness of these organizational methods.

For example, an appropriate response to this question would show that the student can

- clearly understand the concept of “reading strategies”;
- clearly and accurately describe the methods used by the author to organize his strategies for reading nonfiction; and
- clearly and accurately explain how these methods help the reader better understand the purpose of the passage.

Successful student work should provide convincing evidence that the student can use reading skills to address the relevant issue(s), although the response may not address all details and may contain some minor flaws.



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APPLICATIONS

How is this relevant?

By successfully addressing this question, students demonstrate an ability to read a passage that provides practical information in the form of a sequence of strategies and to explain the relationship between the organization of information in the passage and the passage's content. This ability to be a critical thinker and reader is a skill that will help students both in school and in adult life.



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Abraham Lincoln's stepbrother, John D. Johnston, wrote Lincoln that he was "broke" and "hard-pressed" on the family farm in Coles County, Illinois, and needed a loan. Read Lincoln's response to his stepbrother's request. Then answer the questions that follow.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN DENIES A LOAN

[Dec. 24, 1848]

Dear Johnston:

Your request for eighty dollars, I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little, you have said to me, "We can get along very well now," but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now this can only happen by some defect in your conduct. What that defect is, I think I know. You are not *lazy*, and still you are an *idler*. I doubt whether since I saw you, you have done a good whole day's work, in any one day. You do not very much dislike to work, and still you do not work much, merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it.

This habit of uselessly wasting time, is the whole difficulty; it is vastly important to you, and still more so to your children, that you should break this habit. It is more important to them, because they have longer to live, and can keep out of an idle habit before they are in it, easier than they can get out after they are in.

You are now in need of some ready money; and what I propose is, that you shall go to work, "tooth and nail," for somebody who will give you money for it.

Let father and your boys take charge of your things at home—prepare for a crop, and make the crop, and you go to work for the best money wages, or in discharge of any debt you owe, that you can get. And to secure you a fair reward for your labor, I now promise you that for every dollar you will, between this and the first of May, get for your own labor either in money or in your own indebtedness, I will then give you one other dollar.

By this, if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month, from me you will get ten more, making twenty dollars a month for your work. In this, I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines, or the gold mines, in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home—in Coles County.

Now if you will do this, you will soon be out of debt, and what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But if I should now clear you out, next year you will be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in Heaven for \$70 or \$80. Then you value your place in Heaven very cheaply, for I am sure you can with the offer I make you get the seventy or eighty dollars for four or five months' work. You say if I furnish you the money you will deed me the land, and if you don't pay the money back, you will deliver possession—

Nonsense! If you can't now live *with* the land, how will you then live without it? You have always been kind to me, and I do not now mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will but follow my advice, you will find it worth more than eight times eighty dollars to you.

Affectionately

Your brother
A. Lincoln



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How do students provide evidence of what they know and can do in reading?

SAMPLE OPEN-RESPONSE QUESTION

The following is an example of an open-response question designed to provide an opportunity for students to show what they know and can do in the area of reading:

Abraham Lincoln Denies a Loan

It would have been easy for Abraham Lincoln simply to have given his stepbrother a loan. However, he chose another course of action.

- Describe the offer Lincoln made to his stepbrother.
- Explain what Lincoln hoped would be accomplished by making this offer.

Support your answers with details from the letter.

What is the relationship of the assessment to the curriculum?

READING CONTENT

The content of the open-response question “Abraham Lincoln Denies a Loan” addresses Reading Academic Expectation 1.2: “Students make sense of the variety of materials they read.”

This question provides a way for students to show their understanding of several concepts from the *Core Content for Reading Assessment*. Students are asked to read text (i.e., a letter) written by a historical person, to identify the meaning of the text, and to explain the author’s proposed resolution to a conflict that is described in the text.

How good is good enough?

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

An appropriate student response should provide evidence of the student’s ability to read a letter written by Abraham Lincoln in the 1800s and to understand the meaning of the text.

For example, an appropriate response to this question would show that the student can

- clearly and accurately describe the offer Lincoln made to his stepbrother; and
- clearly and accurately explain what Lincoln hoped would be accomplished by making his offer.

Successful student work should provide convincing evidence that the student can use reading skills to address the relevant issue(s), although the response may not address all details and may contain some minor flaws.

How is this relevant?

APPLICATIONS

By successfully answering this question, students demonstrate an ability to read and understand literary text that was written during an earlier period of time. This ability will help students better understand and appreciate both fictional and nonfictional historical text. The ability may also be useful to students as they study primary sources of information in history classes or in the subject of history.

Abraham Lincoln Denies a Loan



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What does the word “goodbye” mean? Mary TallMountain uses this poem to describe what Athabaskans believe it means. First read the poem through; then reread it slowly to more fully understand it. Finally, answer the questions that follow.

THERE IS NO WORD FOR GOODBYE

MARY TALLMOUNTAIN

Sokoya,¹ I said, looking through
the net of wrinkles into
wise black pools
of her eyes.

5 What do you say in Athabaskan
when you leave each other?
What is the word
for goodbye?

10 A shade of feeling rippled
the wind-tanned skin.
Ah, nothing, she said,
watching the river flash.

She looked at me close.
We just say, Tlaa.² That means,
15 See you.
We never leave each other.
When does your mouth
say goodbye to your heart?

20 She touched me light
as a bluebell.
You forget when you leave us,
You're so small then.
We don't use that word.

25 We always think you're coming back,
but if you don't,
we'll see you some place else,
You understand,
There is no word for goodbye.

¹ **sokoya** (s koi' y): aunt on mother's side.

² **tlaa** (tlä)



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SAMPLE OPEN-RESPONSE QUESTION

How do students provide evidence of what they know and can do in reading?

The following is an example of an open-response question designed to provide an opportunity for students to show what they know and can do in the area of reading:

There Is No Word for Goodbye

Describe the difference between “goodbye” and “tlaa” as they are used in this poem.

READING CONTENT

What is the relationship of the assessment to the curriculum?

The content of the open-response question “There Is No Word for Goodbye ” addresses Reading Academic Expectation 1.2: “Students make sense of the variety of materials they read.”

This question provides a way for students to show their understanding of several concepts from the *Core Content for Assessment*. Students are asked to read a poem that represents a cultural perspective, to understand the figurative language used in the poem, and to identify the poem’s meaning.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

How good is good enough?

An appropriate student response should provide evidence of the student’s ability to read and understand a poem that represents a cultural perspective.

For example, an appropriate response to this question would show that the student can

- understand the figurative language used in the poem (e.g., understand the line, “When does your mouth say goodbye to your heart”);
- understand the concept of “tlaa,” a word used in the Athabaskan culture; and
- clearly and accurately describe the difference between “goodbye” and “tlaa” as they are used in the poem.

Successful student work should provide convincing evidence that the student can use reading skills to address the relevant issue(s), although the response may not address all details and may contain some minor flaws.

APPLICATIONS

How is this relevant?

By successfully answering this question, students demonstrate an ability to read and understand a poem that represents a cultural perspective. This ability will help students to better understand and appreciate other types of literary text that may represent a cultural perspective (e.g., novels, short stories, plays, essays). Being able to understand and appreciate another culture’s perspective or point-of-view may also help students in their interactions with people from other cultures.

There Is No Word for Goodbye



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Grade 7 Reading

This article describes a study of how glue works. Read the article. Then answer the questions that follow.

Coming unglued

By David L. Chandler
GLOBE STAFF

This may come as no surprise to anyone who has struggled to peel a price sticker off a gift without leaving a big mess: Experiments show that glue can hold things together with a force up to 100,000 times stronger than theory says it should.

Now, say two physicists at Johns Hopkins University, the secret behind this sticky mystery has been pried loose.

They call it the "Rice Krispies" principle. When you try to pull two glued pieces apart, first the glue pops, then it crackles and finally it snaps. (Actually, that's the reverse of the way the cereal's advertising has it.)

Prying apart two blocks of wood with a dab of Elmer's between them may seem simple, but what is going on between the wood molecules and the glue molecules turns out to be an amazingly complicated process – so complicated that even the most powerful supercomputers had not been able to figure out why glue is so tenacious.

But now, after 300 hours of detailed simulations on a Cray C-90 – by some measures, the fastest computer in the world – a very simple version of the problem has finally been cracked. The solution was published in the journal *Science* by physics professor Mark Robbins and postdoctoral fellow Arlette Baljon.

"The simulations have only begun to be possible," Robbins said in an interview, and they could eventually help engineers develop better adhesives.

Jacob Israelachvili, a chemical engineer at the University of California at Santa Barbara, said the pair's work represents a whole new approach to understanding how glue works.

Robbins, whose analogies tend strongly toward food, explained what happens when something comes unglued.

First there is the popping stage. That's something like what happens when you pull apart two pieces of toast with a layer of honey between them: The honey at first stretches out uniformly, then suddenly holes begin to appear in it.

In the second, "crackling" stage, the holes increase in size and number, in a series of jerky steps – until all that's left is a network of thin strands.

Each strand is made up of glue molecules that are tangled and coiled together like a plate full of spaghetti, so that pulling on one piece tends to pull along a whole mass of strands. Eventually, as they get pulled thinner, each strand breaks – the "snap" – to complete the separation process.

Theorists trying to understand the dynamics of glue had considered only the forces needed to separate one layer of molecules from another, Robbins says, but the real process is much more complex. It's not just one layer of glue molecules being pulled apart, but rather hundreds of layers are being stretched, each subject to the same forces – until one of them finally gives in, and the pieces fly apart.

In short, as singer/songwriter Neil Sedaka put it, breaking up is hard to do.



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The following is an example of an open-response question designed to provide an opportunity for students to show what they know and can do in the area of reading:

Coming unglued

This article explains three stages that occur when two glued objects are pulled apart.

- Describe what happens at **each** of the three stages, in the order that they occur.
- Explain why the theory of how glue works is called the “Rice Krispies” principle.

Use information from the article to support your answers.

What is the relationship of the assessment to the curriculum?

READING CONTENT

The content of the open-response questions “Coming unglued” addresses Reading Academic Expectation 1.2: “Students make sense of the variety of materials they read.”

This question provides a way for students to show their understanding of several concepts from the *Core Content for Reading Assessment*. Students are asked to read an informational article, to summarize information from the article, and to support their summary with details from the text.

How good is good enough?

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

An appropriate student response should provide evidence of the student’s ability to read and understand an informational article, as well as to summarize information from the article.

For example, an appropriate response to this question would show that the student can

- clearly and accurately summarize information from the article (i.e., describe each step of the three stages that occur when two glued objects are pulled apart);
- identify details from the article and accurately use them in the summarization; and
- clearly and accurately connect information from the text to a related real-life event (i.e., explain the connection between the theory of how glues works and the advertising for Rice Krispies).

Successful student work should provide convincing evidence that the student can use reading skills to address the relevant issue(s), although the response may not address all details and may contain some minor flaws.



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APPLICATIONS

How is this relevant?

By successfully answering this question, students demonstrate an ability to read and understand an informational article and to summarize the information presented in the article. This ability will be useful to students both in school (e.g., in understanding texts used in high school and post-secondary classes) and in adult life (e.g., in understanding articles in newspapers, magazines, or on the Internet).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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